



Rhode Island's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge

YEAR TWO – 2013 UPDATE

In December 2011, Rhode Island was one of nine states awarded a grant from the \$500 million Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Fund, a competitive grant program jointly administered by the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. Rhode Island was awarded **\$50 million over four years** to improve the quality of early learning and development programs for Rhode Island's youngest children.

Exceed is the name for Rhode Island's cross departmental initiative to implement the work of the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant. It publicly conveys the State's commitment to early childhood development. The power in the name Exceed is that in one word it conveys the goal that all the statewide partners have for the children of Rhode Island. Exceed supports the children of Rhode Island to achieve new heights in their learning. The partners are committed to helping all children to Exceed.

Rhode Island's grant application focused on four main categories:

- developing high quality, accountable, early childhood programs
- promoting early learning and development outcomes for children
- building a high quality early childhood workforce
- measuring outcomes and the developmental progress of our states youngest children

Rhode Island's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge State Plan is administered by the Lead Agency, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), in partnership with four Participating State Agencies: the Department of Human Services, the Department of Children Youth and Families, the Department of Health, and the Office of Health and Human Services. The administration of this grant demonstrates an extraordinary amount of collaboration across these agencies.

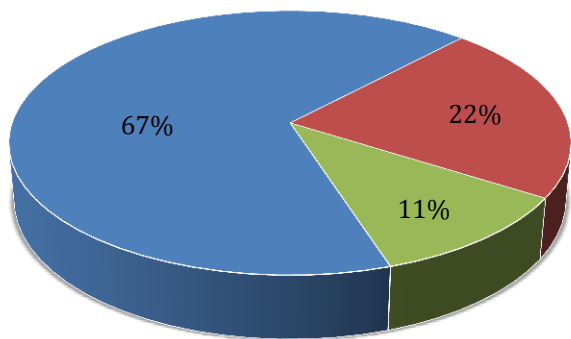
During Year Two of the Grant, Rhode Island realized the following key accomplishments:

- Revised Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS). These Standards guide early care and education practices, such as curriculum and assessment choices, to ensure children receive every opportunity to make progress in the designated learning domains and enter kindergarten prepared to succeed. The Standards also support the understanding among primary caregivers and family members of key early learning milestones. They also serve to inform primary grade teachers of the educational trajectory of the state's youngest learners so that these teachers are even better prepared to support children's learning.
- Finalized the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies (WKC) for Teachers (including Early Childhood Special Educators), Teacher Assistants, and Family Child Care. The WKC articulate the essential skills and knowledge for educators who work with young children by defining what they need to know, understand, and be able to do to promote young children's healthy development and learning.
- Completed the alignment of the continuum of program quality standards for early care and education programs. This alignment included revisions to the DCYF Child Care Regulations for Licensure, Family Child Care Regulations for Licensure, BrightStars TQRIS Standards and the Department of Education Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Regulations.
- Developed plans to ensure early care and education programs have the resources and supports to achieve higher levels of program quality. Rhode Island developed systems for providing financial supports for providers as they enter the program quality continuum. Two significant financial incentives, Program Quality Improvement Grants and Quality Awards, support the costs of improving and maintaining program quality.

*For more information about Rhode Island's Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge Grant, please contact Melissa Emidy, Grant Officer, at 401-222-8165 or Melissa.Emidy@ride.ri.gov
Check us out at Exceed.RI.Gov*

Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge

How is the \$50M being spent?



- **67%** – ELC Grant funds will be used to support Early Learning Programs, the Early Learning Workforce, and Primary Care Practices for Early Intervention: **\$33,645,810**
- **33%** – ELC Grant funds will be used for infrastructure, systems building, and to support State staff in the design and implementation the RTTT – ELC Early Learning initiatives: **\$16,354,190**

(Percentages are based on the currently US ED/HHS approved RTT-ELC budget)

■ **67%: Supports to Early Learning Programs, the Early Learning Workforce, Primary Care Practices**

- One-time incentive payments for all programs participating in BrightStars
- Quality Awards for Early Learning Programs to off-set the costs associated with maintaining high quality standard for licensed early learning centers and family child care homes serving children participating in CCAP with a BrightStars quality rating of 3, 4 or 5 Additional bonus to programs for providing high quality care to infants and toddlers within the CCAP program
- Grants for licensed Early Learning Programs seeking to make quality improvements to move up one or more levels within BrightStars or seeking RIDE CECE approval
- Supports for the Early Learning Workforce including expanded Professional Development opportunities, Early Learning and Development Standards Training, Technical Assistance, Child Assessment.
- Access to Early Childhood college credits at CCRI, and T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships in teacher preparation programs.
- Supports for Early Intervention to improve formative assessment practices
- Technical Assistance and supports to Primary Care Practices to conduct developmental screening using standardized tools and implement evidence-based interventions

■ **11%: Consultants**

- National experts, researchers, meeting facilitators/recorders to support ELS, KEA, and WKC Frameworks Development
- Developmental Screening Campaign
- Baseline Data Scan
- KIDSNET
- External Communication Plan

■ **22%: State Support (RIDE, DHS, DOH, DCYF, EOHHS)**

- For planning, development, and implementation of the state's RTT-ELC plan including salary, fringe benefits, computers, office supplies and travel for 29.75 FTEs
- 13% indirect costs